

NOTES FOR PUBLIC UTTERANCES ON  
CIA FUNCTIONS

(Preliminary Comments)

Public statements about CIA will fall in three general categories: (1) those to the general public, (2) those to uncleared groups who have, however, intelligence training and special interest, and (3) cleared groups who have a considerable amount of intelligence knowledge. While the basic thoughts on CIA functions will hew to the same line in all three cases, the speaker will be faced with very different problems. With the general public it is purely an information problem based on the assumption that the ordinary person has barely heard of CIA. Intelligence groups, such as reserve units, probably will be more interested in techniques and distribution of functions. The highly cleared groups, such as the War College, know a considerable amount and are interested in more specific problems and operations. Consequently, any outline must be completely flexible to meet the audience before it and the following notes are based on the approach to the uninformed public and are, in effect, an outline rather than a speech.

- I. Introduction. (The introduction will vary in each instance and no suggestions are offered, except that it be short and pertinent to the audience addressed.)
- II. The Idea of Intelligence. (The following are suggestions, but the speaker is on his own in this section.)

There is no great mystery about intelligence despite some of the ideas put forth by so-called experts. Basically it is a matter of common sense. An analogous function which is familiar to everyone is performed by the judicial system. The courts, the judges, the juries and the lawyers primary purpose is to bring out all the evidence and to decide what facts are pertinent and true, in an attempt to settle disputes. But there are two important distinctions between this function and that of intelligence.

The courts take the facts as gathered and apply to them the learning and precedents of centuries in order to come to a conclusion in each case. The courts, therefore, are looking backward. Intelligence considers all available pertinent information in order to

interpret the facts as indications of future events or trends. Intelligence applies the experience of the past, but is looking to the future. Secondly, the courts have, over hundreds of years, evolved an elaborate system for acquiring, appraising and applying information. Intelligence, at least in this country, has developed no such mechanism until recently and our problem is, therefore, one largely of methodology and technique, i.e. how to do it and with what.

III. History of Intelligence. (Again nothing binding in this section, but the factual part may be useful.)

Not that intelligence is anything new in American history, the Colonies had pretty good intelligence usually gathered informally by private individuals. The Revolutionary War was noted for informers on both sides and it was mainly a problem of sorting out the trustworthy sources from the rumor-mongers. The British apparently then had not reached their present expertness inasmuch as the British fleet was at one time ordered to sail up the Bronx River to White Plains although the maximum depth of water was two feet for the main length of the river. The War of 1812 has its intelligence stories, and the Civil War, of course, is famous for its spies and counterspies.

Most of this was military intelligence, but all the while was growing the acquisition facility of the diplomatic arm of the government. More and more American ambassadors, ministers and consuls were being sent out through the world and each became an intelligence collecting and forwarding agency in himself. With him were the military attaches who reported to their departments on military and technical matters and also on matters of general interest.

By the first World War, the government in Washington was beginning to have information sufficient to keep it reasonably well informed. When wartime came along, however, we had no intelligence adequate to cope with the emergency situation. Consequently, during that war we had to depend heavily on the British, French and other services. In peacetime we went back to the pre-World War I system where masses of information poured into the separate desks of the State Department, and into the Army and Navy from their representatives. People dealing with any one area or problem could find a great deal of information, but to a large extent it was kept in separate boxes and there was no machinery and little inclination to break down the barriers. The top levels could call on various departments for whatever information they had, but there was no assurance that all sources of information would thereby be tapped or that the information brought out would be properly analyzed.

Pearl Harbor was, of course, the catastrophe which not only brought war, but broke the weak back of the intelligence structure. As it later appeared, there was a great deal of information about Japanese activities and intentions, but there was no means to assure that the information reached the policy planners in the orderly current manner necessary to cohesive thinking and planning.

In 1941, President Roosevelt created the Office of Coordinator of Information. Later this Agency was broken into the Office of War Information and the Office of Strategic Services, known as OSS. OSS was by no means a central intelligence coordinating activity. In the first place, it was under the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who had their own Joint Intelligence Staff for their planning, and OSS had only liaison relations with the Department of State. It did, however, contain the germ of a central activity and a plan was actually drawn up in 1942 which was very similar to the present organization. At the end of the war OSS was disbanded, but by this time the idea of a central agency was firmly fixed.

In January 1946, President Truman issued a directive creating the Central Intelligence Group to operate under the direction of the National Intelligence Authority. This Authority was composed of the Secretaries of State, War and Navy, and the President's personal representative who was then Admiral Leahy. The Central Intelligence Group was intended to be a small group of top-level intelligence experts who would synthesize the products of the various departmental intelligence agencies. It would be composed of people loaned by the various agencies themselves and would have no independent organization or status. By the end of the first year, experience had already shown the difficulty of operating by dependence on other agencies and the concept was changing to a more positive approach in the preparation of national estimates.

Discussion of the proper role for the Central Intelligence Group continued in parallel with the controversy on the unification of the Services. Finally the National Security Act of 1947 created the Department of Defense, and at the same time established the National Security Council and the Central Intelligence Agency. As far as the Central Intelligence Agency was concerned, the National Security Council took over generally the functions of the old National Intelligence Authority, and the Central Intelligence Agency, as an independent Executive agency, was assigned certain functions to perform under the direction of the National Security Council.

IV. Statutory Responsibilities of the Central Intelligence Agency.  
(This will be followed closely in all cases.)

The National Security Act assigned the following specific functions to the Central Intelligence Agency:

1. To advise the National Security Council in matters concerning such intelligence activities as relate to national security;
2. To make recommendations to the National Security Council ~~with~~ the coordination of such intelligence activities;
3. To correlate and evaluate intelligence relating to the national security and to provide for appropriate dissemination of such intelligence within the government;
4. To perform services of common concern for the benefit of existing intelligence agencies, and
5. To perform such other functions and duties related to intelligence as the National Security Council may from time to time direct.

All of these, of course, require direction from the National Security Council, but there are three provisos which are absolute in the Act. One states that the Agency shall have no police, subpoena, law enforcement powers or internal security functions. This proviso serves the dual purpose of ensuring that the Central Intelligence Agency will not encroach on the internal security duties of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and, secondly, will not have police powers which could lead to the growth of a Gestapo.

The second proviso ensures that the departments and agencies shall continue to collect, evaluate, correlate and disseminate departmental intelligence. Obviously, the departments and agencies, particularly the military and the Department of State, have specialized needs for reports, studies and special estimates in order to perform their functions properly. It was felt that one central agency could not adequately service all these needs, and any attempt to put all intelligence in one package would provide endless confusion and poor service.

The third proviso places on the Director of Central Intelligence the responsibility for protecting intelligence sources and methods from unauthorized disclosure. This is a heavy burden,

particularly in view of the American tradition of free speech and comment on all aspects of governmental activities. There is an inevitable conflict between security of operations and the principle of free speech, but since the whole purpose of the Central Intelligence Agency is to assist in safeguarding such principles, it can only attempt to reach a balance between secrecy of intelligence sources and method and proper informing of the public.

V. Functions of the Central Intelligence Agency. (This, too, should be closely followed.)

The nature of certain of the above-stated-functions is obvious. In its duty to advise the National Security Council, CIA should bring to the Council's attention such matters as obvious gaps in the intelligence structure, unnecessary duplication, or other special conditions which might require Council action. The duty to recommend follows on the duty to advise and, of course, requires the Central Intelligence Agency to present a solution to problems arising in the intelligence field. The duty to perform services of common concern for the benefit of the other intelligence agencies is a logical assignment to the Central Intelligence Agency, in the interest of economy and efficiency, of such operations as foreign broadcast monitoring, the exploitation of foreign documents and certain reference services which are used by all the agencies. The responsibility for performing such other duties and functions relating to the national security as the Council may direct is a catch-all recognition that there are many problems arising in connection with the acquisition and coordination of intelligence information which may require centralized control and responsibility.

All of these functions are important, but the heart of the matter, for which all other functions are but necessary supports, is the duty to evaluate, correlate and disseminate intelligence relating to the national security. To evaluate means to consider the accuracy of reported intelligence and its import on the problem under study. To correlate means to study varying reports on a subject, to iron out discrepancies, and to combine complementary information. To disseminate means to ensure that the people who need the finished product, get it. Thus, the Central Intelligence Agency is given the responsibility of seeing to it that the United States has adequate central machinery for the examination and interpretation of intelligence so that the national security will not again be jeopardized by failure to coordinate the best intelligence opinion in the



country based on all available information. This requires the coordination of intelligence opinion in the form of reports or estimates affecting, generally, the national security as a whole, this being intelligence relating to the national security.

The Act apparently gives the Central Intelligence Agency the independent right to produce national intelligence. As a practical matter, such estimates can be written only with the collaboration of experts in many fields and with the cooperation of various departments and agencies of the Government. They deal with topics of wide scope relevant to the determination of basic policy, such as the assessment of a country's war potential, its preparedness for war, its strategic capabilities and intentions, its vulnerability to various forms of direct attack or indirect pressures. An intelligence estimate of such scope would go beyond the competence of any single Department or Agency of the Government. A major objective, then, in establishing the Central Intelligence Agency was to provide the administrative machinery for the coordination of intelligence opinion, for its assembly and review, objectively and impartially, and for its expression in the form of estimates of national scope and importance.

The concept of national intelligence estimates underlying the statute is that of an authoritative interpretation and appraisal that will serve as a firm guide to policy-makers and planners. A national intelligence estimate should reflect the coordination of the best intelligence opinion, with notation of and reasons for dissent in the instances when there is not unanimity. It should be based on all available information and be prepared with full knowledge of our own plans and in the light of our own policy requirements. The estimate should be compiled and assembled centrally by an agency whose objectivity and disinterestedness are not open to question. Its ultimate approval should rest upon the collective judgment of the highest officials in the various intelligence agencies. Finally, it should command recognition and respect throughout the Government as the best available and presumably the most authoritative intelligence estimate.

- VI. Inter-Agency Relationships. (The thought here should be followed, but may be elaborated to suit the audiences knowledge of the other agencies and their functions.)

In the performance of its functions, it is most important to understand clearly the relationship of the Central Intelligence Agency to the departmental intelligence agencies. It

should be noted that in the Act the Central Intelligence Agency may only recommend on coordination of intelligence activities to the National Security Council but cannot coordinate on its own authority. This statutory limitation, leaving the final coordination determination in the National Security Council, is designed to protect the autonomy and the internal arrangements of departments and agencies performing intelligence functions. The Secretaries of the departments who are members of the National Security Council are in a position to review recommendations of the Central Intelligence Agency concerning the other departments and, consequently, may have all sides of the matter heard in Council meetings.

In spite of this limitation, however, it is clear that the Central Intelligence Agency is expected to provide the initiative and leadership in developing a coordinated intelligence system. Actually the Central Intelligence Agency and the departmental agencies are inter-dependent and must support each other fully for the effective accomplishment of their missions.

Not only must the Central Intelligence Agency be staffed with personnel of outstanding caliber to provide the intelligent analysis and imagination required for national estimates, but it must also encourage the other agencies to build up their intelligence sections as career assignments which will attract the best minds available in the various services. Able leadership and strong initiative from the Central Intelligence Agency, combined with willing cooperation of well equipped departmental agencies, are the prerequisites for a truly effective intelligence service. In the present state of the world, the policy planners of our government are faced with a multitude of problems of great and varying complexity. In all of them, and particularly in the war of ideas between east and west, knowledge is the essential element and this knowledge is the responsibility of the intelligence service as a whole. The Central Intelligence Agency is the key to effective performance of this responsibility and therefore to the success of planning for the national defense and security.